

September 10, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians,

What a glorious beginning to the new school year – not only with the beautiful weather, but also with the energy created by a building full of exuberant students and staff. It's a tremendous atmosphere in which to work. May this year prove to be a glorious one for everyone.

**START OF SCHOOL:** With almost two weeks under our belts, routines are being established, homework is being given, and learning is in full swing. We have started the year with 260 students from 180 families. A staff (full and parttime; paid and volunteer) of 35 caring individuals provide for the students and their families. Working together, it's a fantastic team.

**H<sub>1</sub>N<sub>1</sub>:** Please read the attached sheets in reference to the H<sub>1</sub>N<sub>1</sub> flu. We are taking necessary precautions to keep students and staff healthy, without becoming fearful. It is essential that you keep your children home if they are sick and then notify us of their illness. Plenty of sleep, fresh air, good food, and a positive attitude will help to fend off illness. Washing hands often with soap and water is also beneficial in killing those infectious germs. Thank you in advance for your efforts to keep us all well.

**PARENT MEETING:** On Thursday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Fr. Vincent, Jodi Maki, and I met with parents for the first of two parent meetings scheduled for this school year. Fr. Vincent spoke of the parish's commitment to St. Philip's School and its families and the responsibility of all families to be engaged at some level in the fund raising activities scheduled for this year. He reminded folks of their Service Hours obligation, of the tracking and reviewing of the program, and of the vital importance of the involvement of families. Lastly, he spoke of his eleven-week sabbatical which began this week. Jodi Maki, our parish Development Director, invited everyone to become involved with Parent Association and responded to specifics about the fund raisers. I reviewed aspects of the forthcoming Handbook, especially touching on necessary communication with the office, appropriate use of cell phones, and certain aspects of the dress code. Look for a letter detailing specifics from the meeting.

Although the attendance wasn't as great as we had hoped for, the messages were well received. I ask that every family make an attempt to attend the next Parent Meeting scheduled for Monday, January 25, at 2:45 P.M. That will be a kick-off of registration. I will also attempt to do a much better job of inundating you with reminders.

**PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ADDRESS TO STUDENTS:** On Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, President Obama spoke to our students, as well as to other students around the country, encouraging them to take responsibility for their education and to set achievement goals for themselves. Students in grades 4 – 8 heard the President's remarks. If you missed the speech, you can go to <http://www.whitehouse.gov/live> for a copy of the text or to view the presentation.

**JOIN US FOR MASS:** School Masses are held regularly at 8:40 A.M. on Wednesdays (when school is in session). Please join us whenever you are able.

**NO SCHOOL:** A reminder that there is no school for our students on Monday, September 21. Our teachers will be attending a ministry formation day in Crookston, led by Bishop Hoepfner.

**FALL FESTIVAL:** Are you looking for a family activity? Come to the Fall Festival on Sunday, September 27, from 10:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M. right here at St. Philip's. There will be games, prizes, auction items, a delicious meal, other food to eat, and a great deal of FUN. Hope to see you there.

Need service hours? How about helping out with the Fall Festival. Sign up with Paula DeClusin or Jodi Maki. Or...bake some cakes, cookies, or other treats for the Cake Walk or Bake Sale.

**MEDICAL REMINDERS:** Parents please bring inhalers, epi pens, and other needed medications for students to the office. A form must be on file here for your child to be able to receive the medication while at school – and only a parent can complete the form. Thanks.

**SAFE ENVIRONMENT:** To volunteer in any program, trip, or activity that involves children, all adults must have received diocesan Safe Environment Certification. The certification is good for only one year and hence, must be completed annually. To receive certification this year, do the following: 1) complete the Acknowledgement and Authorization form for volunteers; and 2) complete the Safe Environment Training – Component A, which includes passing the shot quiz at the end of the training. Materials may be obtained at the school or RF offices or on line at “Safe Envir” at [www.crookston.org](http://www.crookston.org). Get certified so that we can use your talents. Thanks.

**BEGINNING OF THE YEAR FORMS AND FEES:** If you were unable to attend the Visitation on August 31, please make sure you sign and return the necessary beginning of the year forms. These include an emergency contact form, a health form, e-mail address form, and perhaps textbook, health, and guidance (gr. 7 & 8) forms from ISD#31.

The necessary fees include snack, snack milk, technology, music, and science – all dependent on the grade level of students. Please call for more details.

Lunch money is also needed in accounts. You may check out your lunch account by logging into [www.wordwareinc.com](http://www.wordwareinc.com), choosing the school district of “St. Philip’s Catholic School”, and entering your family’s ID and pin. Initially, your pin number is the last four digits of your home phone. Please keep your account current. Remember to apply for the benefits from the Federal Meals Program at any time throughout the year when your family may qualify economically.

**HELP WANTED:** 1) I am looking for individuals to assist with our pre-kindergarten lunches, one day or many days during the week. The time is from 11:45 – 12:45. Pay, free lunch, and hugs are the benefits. 2) I also would like to hire a high school or college student for our Noah’s Ark program. Again, one day or many days of the week, 3:30 to 4:30 or 5:00 would be terrific. There’s pay, a snack, and lots of games and kids to brighten one’s day. Please have interested individuals contact me.

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:** If you’d like to volunteer, here’s where we could use your assistance: hot lunch servers; pre-k lunch; committee members; Fall Festival workers; Marathon participants; copy people; Information Desk help. Or, if you have something to offer, let us know and we’ll work from there.

**ISD #31:** We are fortunate to have a wonderful relationship with the Bemidji Public Schools. Our seventh and eighth graders attend the Middle School for various Allied Arts classes as well as to participate in their sports and activities. Our students receive Special Education services from Vickie Wangberg and Marty Templeton at Central School, and Title I assistance from Patty Lempola and Vince Collyard right here in our building.

**ST. PHILIP’S SCHOOL COMMITTEES:** The **School Council** functions as an advisory group to the administration, meeting the second Tuesday of the month. The members are: Kevin Erpelding, chr.; Rob Beyer, vice chr; Jennifer Leisenheimer, secretary; Tim Dondelinger; Jim Grimm; and Trish Jones. **Parent Association** is a support group for the school and meets the third Thursday after school. It consists of any and all interested parents who organize, support, and often finance activities for the school. This year’s officers are: Dorie Muller, chr.; Becky Bentfield, vice-chr.; and Becky Maki, treasurer. More members are welcome. **The Safety Concerns Committee** meets as necessary to address issues pertinent to the safety of all at St. Philip’s. Trish Jones is the chair. Their next meeting is Thursday, September 24, at 6:30 P.M. Please contact either Trish (333-3999) or me (444-4938) to bring a concern to our attention. I thank all the committee members for their time and involvement.

**CONTACT THE SCHOOL:** Please remember to contact us: if your child is going to be late or absent; if your child will be leaving school early (especially for sports); if the after school routine of your child changes; if your child is ill or injured; if you have any questions or concerns. Our phone number is 444-4938. Our fax number is 444-1379. Our web site is [www.stphilipsbemidji.org](http://www.stphilipsbemidji.org). Contact Deb Olson at [dolson@stphilipsbemidji.org](mailto:dolson@stphilipsbemidji.org).

May your year be grace-filled!

Very truly,

Carol Rettinger  
Principal